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RESUMPTION OF GAS SUPPLIES IN NT

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IN ANSWER TO PRESS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DISRUPTION OF GAS SUPPLIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES ON SUNDAY, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (MONDAY) THAT IT WAS SATISFIED THAT THE HONG KONG AND CHINA GAS COMPANY WAS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO RESTORE SUPPLIES AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

"IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT CONTRARY TO EARLIER EXPECTATIONS, A FURTHER 40,000 HOUSEHOLDS WILL BE RECONNECTED BY 6 AM TOMORROW, AND 95 PER CENT OF ALL AFFECTED HOUSEHOLDS WILL HAVE THEIR SUPPLY RESTORED BY 6 AM ON WEDNESDAY," HE SAID.

WITH REGARD TO PREVENTIVE MEASURES, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS IN FACT PREPARING LEGISLATION TO PROTECT GAS MAINS DURING EXCAVATION WORK.

AT PRESENT, THERE IS ONLY VOLUNTARY LIAISON BETWEEN THE GAS COMPANY AND CONTRACTORS OVER THE LOCATION OF PIPES AND THERE ARE NO PROVISIONS IN THE CURRENT GAS LEGISLATION FOR THE GAS AUTHORITY TO PROSECUTE CONTRACTORS.

"THIS IS UNSATISFACTORY AND WE ARE CURRENTLY PREPARING AMENDMENTS TO THE GAS SAFETY ORDINANCE WHICH WOULD MAKE IT AN OFFENCE FOR A CONTRACTOR NOT TO TAKE REASONABLE MEASURES TO CHECK THE LOCATION OF GAS MAINS AND TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO THEM," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"UNDER A BILL TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN FEBRUARY 1995, CONTRACTORS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO FINES AND IMPRISONMENT, AND TO MAKE GOOD THE DAMAGE, FOR CARELESS EXCAVATION LEADING TO THE DAMAGE OF GAS MAINS," HE ADDED.

AN INVESTIGATION IS BEING CONDUCTED INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YESTERDAY'S INCIDENT AND APPROPRIATE ACTION WILL BE TAKEN IF IT IS FOUND THAT THE CONTRACTOR CONTRAVENED ANY EXISTING LEGISLATION RELATING TO THE EXCAVATION WORK BEING CARRIED OUT, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO VIEWS ON GMB SEATING CAPACITY

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A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN TODAY (MONDAY) WELCOMED THE SUPPORT GIVEN BY THE HONG KONG-KOWLOON-NEW TERRITORIES PUBLIC MAXICAB OPERATORS' GENERAL ASSOCIATION TO THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED MEASURES TO ADDRESS TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND CURB PRIVATE VEHICLE GROWTH.

IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES ON THE DEPARTMENT'S POSITION ON THE ASSOCIATION'S VIEWS ON SEATING CAPACITY OF GREEN MINIBUSES (GMB), THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE QUESTION OF INCREASING THE SEATING CAPACITY OF GMB WAS DISCUSSED BY THE LEGCO TRANSPORT PANEL IN JULY THIS YEAR.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO MADE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL, HE SAID.

/"IN SHORT, ...

"IN SHORT, WHILE ACCEPTING THAT THE PROPOSAL MAY BENEFIT SOME GMB OPERATORS AND PASSENGERS, THE EFFECT WILL NOT APPLY UNIFORMLY TO ALL GMB OPERATORS AND ALL PASSENGERS IN THE TERRITORY, GIVEN THE VASTLY DIFFERENT CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THEY OPERATE.

"THERE MAY ALSO BE ADVERSE IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATORS AND OTHER PASSENGERS, FOR EXAMPLE, FRANCHISED BUSES WHICH CARRY 34 PER CENT OF OUR DAILY COMMUTERS."

IN ANY CASE, THE VIEWS AND PROPOSALS OF THE ASSOCIATION WILL BE TAKEN INTO FULL ACCOUNT IN THE CONSULTATION PROCESS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED MEASURES TO ADDRESS TRAFFIC CONGESTION, HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN NOTED THAT IT WAS TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE TO INCREASE THE SEATING CAPACITY OF GMBS, AND SUCH INCREASE MIGHT HAVE A BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON FARES FOR SOME GMB ROUTES.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THERE WOULD BE THE FOLLOWING DISADVANTAGES:

I. IT WOULD REDUCE THE LEVEL OF PASSENGER COMFORT IN GMBS;

II. IT WOULD CAUSE TRAFFIC PROBLEMS AS LONGER TIME FOR KERBSIDE BOARDING AND ALIGHTING ACTIVITIES WILL BE REQUIRED;

III. GMBS PLAY A SUPPLEMENTARY ROLE IN THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT HIERARCHY, BY PROVIDING A MORE FREQUENT AND HIGHER QUALITY SERVICE USING SMALLER VEHICLES THAN BUSES. FURTHER INCREASE IN SEATING WOULD ERODE THIS ROLE, BLUR THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN GMBS AND BUSES, AND POSE GREATER COMPETITION TO FRANCHISED PUBLIC BUSES. SOME ROUTES OPERATED BY THE LATTER WITH MARGINAL VIABILITY AND PARTIAL COMPETITION FROM GMBS MAY HAVE TO BE ABANDONED OR MAY HAVE TO BE INCREASINGLY SUBSIDISED BY OTHER MORE VIABLE ROUTES;

IV. AS A RESULT OF (III), THERE COULD BE GREATER PRESSURE ON BUS FARES, WHICH ARE USED BY THE MAJORITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT PASSENGERS BELONGING TO THE LOWER INCOME BRACKET; AND

V. FURTHERMORE, THE PACE OF CONVERSION FROM RED MINIBUS (RMB) TO GMB WOULD BE SLOWED DOWN. A NEW GMB ROUTE WHICH REQUIRES, SAY, FIVE 16-SEAT RMBS WOULD ONLY REQUIRE FOUR 20-SEAT RMBS IF SEATING CAPACITY WERE INCREASED. ALSO, IT HAS BEEN THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT'S PRACTICE TO EXERCISE CONSIDERABLE DISCRETION AND FLEXIBILITY TO INTRODUCE GMB ROUTES WHICH PARTLY DUPLICATE FRANCHISED BUS ROUTES, OFTEN BY OVERRULING OBJECTION FROM BUS OPERATORS. THIS IS FOR THE SAKE OF ENHANCING PUBLIC SERVICE WITHOUT SIGNIFICANTLY HURTING THE VIABILITY OF CERTAIN BUS SERVICES SIMPLY BECAUSE THE CAPACITY AND MODE OF OPERATION OF GMBS ARE DIFFERENT. WHILE INCREASING THE SEATING CAPACITY OF GMBS MAY WELL IMPROVE THEIR VIABILITY, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE INTERNAL BALANCE AND RELATIVITIES WITHIN THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT HIERARCHY, THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO APPLY ITS PLANNING CRITERIA IN A MUCH MORE RIGID MANNER - THE OUTCOME WILL BE A NET LOSS TO THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC ALTHOUGH IT MAY BE A NET GAIN TO GMB OPERATORS.

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NO VM ILLEGALLY DETAINED

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A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED THIS AFTERNOON (MONDAY) THAT A LETTER HAD BEEN SENT TO PAM BAKER & CO. IN RESPONSE TO THEIR SUBMISSION OF NOVEMBER 25 REQUESTING THE RELEASE OF FURTHER VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS.

IN THE REPLY, THE GOVERNMENT REITERATED THAT NO VIETNAMESE MIGRANT WAS ILLEGALLY DETAINED PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 15, 1994 AND THEIR BELIEF THAT NO ONE WAS NOW ILLEGALLY DETAINED.

"THERE IS THEREFORE NO QUESTION OF ANY FURTHER VIETNAMESE BEING RELEASED FROM DETENTION IN RESPONSE TO THIS LETTER FROM PAM BAKER & CO.," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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TPB TO SEEK JUDICIAL REVIEW

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THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD HAS DECIDED TO FILE AN APPLICATION FOR LEAVE FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW OF THE DECISION OF THE TOWN PLANNING APPEAL BOARD TO ALLOW A RESIDENTIAL AND GOLF COURSE DEVELOPMENT IN NAM SANG WAI WITH CONDITIONS.

THE DEVELOPMENT WAS REJECTED BY THE BOARD UPON REVIEW IN JUNE LAST YEAR. THE APPLICANT LODGED AN APPEAL AGAINST THE BOARD'S DECISION TO THE TOWN PLANNING APPEAL BOARD IN SEPTEMBER OF THE SAME YEAR.

THE APPEAL BOARD CONDUCTED HEARING OF THE APPEAL IN MARCH AND MAY THIS YEAR AND DECIDED TO ALLOW THE APPEAL WITH CONDITIONS IN AUGUST.

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PROVISIONAL FIGURES OF EXTERNAL TRADE FOR OCTOBER 1994

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BOTH RE-EXPORTS AND IMPORTS CONTINUED TO SHOW MARKED INCREASES IN OCTOBER 1994 COMPARED WITH OCTOBER 1993. DOMESTIC EXPORTS ALSO SHOWED A SIGNIFICANT PICK-UP.

THESE ARE SHOWN IN THE PROVISIONAL FIGURES OF EXTERNAL TRADE FOR OCTOBER RELEASED TODAY (MONDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS (COMPRISING RE-EXPORTS AND DOMESTIC EXPORTS) INCREASED BY $16.3 BILLION OR 17% TO $112.7 BILLION IN OCTOBER 1994.

/WITHIN TOTAL .....

WITHIN TOTAL EXPORTS, THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS, AT $91.3 BILLION IN OCTOBER 1994, WAS $14.6 BILLION OR 19% HIGHER THAN A YEAR EARLIER.

THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS ALSO INCREASED, BY $1.7 BILLION OR 8.5% OVER A YEAR EARLIER TO $21.3 BILLION IN OCTOBER.

MEANWHILE, THE VALUE OF IMPORTS INCREASED BY $22.6 BILLION OR 24% TO $116.2 BILLION.

AS THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS IN OCTOBER 1994 WAS SMALLER THAN THAT OF TOTAL IMPORTS, A VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT OF $3.5 BILLION, EQUIVALENT TO 3.0% OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS, WAS RECORDED.

THIS COMPARED WITH A SURPLUS OF $2.8 BILLION, EQUIVALENT TO 3.0% OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS, IN OCTOBER 1993.

IN THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF 1994, THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS GREW BY 12% OVER THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

AMONGST THIS, THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS ROSE BY 15%, WHILE THAT OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS FELL ONLY SLIGHTLY BY 1.0%.

THE VALUE OF IMPORTS SHOWED AN INCREASE OF 16%.

IN THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF 1994, A VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT OF $61.4 BILLION, EQUIVALENT TO 6.0% OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS, WAS RECORDED.

THIS COMPARED WITH A DEFICIT OF $23.7 BILLION, EQUIVALENT TO 2.7% OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS, RECORDED IN THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF 1993.

COMMENTING ON THE LATEST TRADE FIGURES, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID EXPORT PERFORMANCE IMPROVED FURTHER IN OCTOBER.

WHILE THE GROWTH IN RE-EXPORTS ACCELERATED, DOMESTIC EXPORTS RECOVERED TO SHOW A NOTABLE INCREASE, HE SAID.

RETAINED IMPORTS REMAINED ROBUST, RISING BY 37% IN OCTOBER OVER A YEAR EARLIER.

HOWEVER, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE WIDENED VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT REQUIRED MONITORING.

A MORE DETAILED ANALYSIS OF HONG KONG'S EXTERNAL TRADE FOR OCTOBER 1994, BY COMMODITY AND COUNTRY, WILL BE RELEASED IN MID-DECEMBER.

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/PROVISIONAL FIGURES .....

PROVISIONAL FIGURES OF EXTERNAL TRADE FOR OCTOBER 1994

MERCHANDISE:	Domestic Exports :	$21,345 million
	Re-exports :	$91,340 million
	Total Exports :	$112,685 million
	Imports :	$116,174 million
	Trade balance :	-$3,489 million

COMPARATIVE FIGURES

Latest 3 months	Aug 94 to Oct 94 HK$ Mn.	Aug 93 to Oct 93 HK$ Mn.	Change HK$ Mn.	Change %
Domestic Exports	62,338	58,748	+3,589	+6.1
(% of Total Exports)	(18.9%)	(20.7%)		
Re-exports	266,802	224,807	+41,995	+18.7
Total Exports	329,140	283,555	+45,585	+16.1
Imports	339,343	278,661	+60,681	+21.8
Trade balance	-10,203	4,894	-15,097	

Same month last year	October 1994 HK$ Mn.	October 1993 HK$ Mn.	Change HK$ Mn.	Change %
Domestic Exports	21,345	19,665	+1,680	+8.5
(% of Total Exports)	(18.9%)	(20.4%)		
Re-exports	91,340	76,697	+14,643	+19.1
Total Exports	112,685	96,362	+16,323	+16.9
Imports	116,174	93,566	+22,609	+24.2
Trade balance	-3,489	2,797	-6,286	

Last month	October 1994 HK$ Mn.	September 1994 HK$ Mn.	Change HK$ Mn.	Change %
Domestic Exports	21,345	19,892	+1,453	+7.3
(% of Total Exports)	(18.9%)	(18.4%)		
Re-exports	91,340	88,105	+3,235	+3.7
Total Exports	112,685	107,996	+4,689	+4.3
Imports	116,174	113,563	+2,611	+2.3
Trade balance	-3,489	-5,567	+2,077	

Calendar year to-date	Jan-Oct 1994 HK$ Mn.	Jan-Oct 1993 HK$ Mn.	Change HK$ Mn.	Change %
Domestic Exports	181,519	183,300	-1,781	-1.0
(% of Total Exports)	(18.9%)	(21.3%)		
Re-exports	779,123	677,099	+102,024	+15.1
Total Exports	960,642	860,399	+100,243	+11.7
Imports	1,022,040	884,078	+137,962	+15.6
Trade balance	-61,398	-23,679	-37,719	

Last 12 months	Nov 93 to Oct 94 HK$ Mn.	Nov 92 to Oct 93 HK$ Mn.	Change HK$ Mn.	Change %
Domestic Exports	221,245	225,285	-4,039	-1.8
(% of Total Exports)	(19.3%)	(21.9%)		
Re-exports	925,248	804,688	+120,560	+15.0
Total Exports	1,146,493	1,029,973	+116,520	+11.3
Imports	1,210,559	1,059,417	+151,142	+14.3
Trade balance	-64,066	-29,444	-34,621	

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WAY CLEARED FOR HK'S EXPORTS OF TEXTILES,
APPAREL AND SHOES TO MEXICO

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THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO A LATEST PROPOSAL WHICH THE TRADE DEPARTMENT HAS DEVISED TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR HONG KONG'S EXPORTS OF TEXTILES, APPAREL AND SHOES TO MEXICO.

ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY (MONDAY), DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TRADE MR THOMAS YIU SAID: "THE NEW PROPOSAL IS FOR TRADERS TO ACCOMPANY THEIR RELEVANT EXPORTS TO MEXICO WITH A SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENT WHICH GIVES INFORMATION INCLUDING THE MANUFACTURING PROCESSES THAT HAVE BEEN DONE IN HONG KONG.

"THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT HAS CONFIRMED THAT THIS DOCUMENT, TOGETHER WITH THE OTHERS THAT WE HAVE ANNOUNCED PREVIOUSLY, WILL ENABLE TRADERS TO COMPLY WITH ALL THE MEXICAN CERTIFICATION OF ORIGIN REQUIREMENTS," HE SAID.

SINCE THE MEXICAN NEW CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN REQUIREMENTS CAME INTO EFFECT ON SEPTEMBER 1, A NUMBER OF COMPANIES HAVE ENCOUNTERED PROBLEMS IN EXPORTING TEXTILES, APPAREL AND SHOES TO MEXICO.

CONSIGNMENTS HAVE BEEN DETAINED BECAUSE THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT WANTED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED ON CERTIFICATE OF HONG KONG ORIGIN (CHKO).

MR YIU SAID: "ACCORDING TO OUR EARLIER UNDERSTANDING REACHED WITH THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IN SEPTEMBER, FOR SHIPMENTS OF TEXTILES, APPAREL AND SHOES, THE ONLY ADDITIONAL DOCUMENT OTHER THAN A CHKO REQUIRED IS A FORM SPECIFIED BY THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH CAN BE COMPLETED BY THE TRADERS THEMSELVES WITHOUT INVOLVING THE DEPARTMENT OR THE GOVERNMENT APPROVED CERTIFICATION ORGANISATIONS (GACOS).

"WE WERE THEREFORE PUZZLED THAT SUBSEQUENTLY, THE MEXICAN CUSTOMS HAS REQUIRED OUR CHKO TO CONTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - TARIFF NUMBER, INVOICE NUMBER AND ORIGIN CRITERION ACCORDING TO MEXICAN ORIGIN RULES," HE SAID.

"THIS IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS NOT THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO REQUIRE EXPORTING COUNTRIES TO CHANGE THE FORMAT OF THEIR ORIGIN CERTIFICATES.

"WE HAVE PRINCIPLED AND PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH A REQUIREMENT FOR US TO MODIFY HONG KONG'S ORIGIN CERTIFICATE TO INCLUDE ORIGIN DETERMINATION BASED ON MEXICAN ORIGIN RULES, BECAUSE TO DO SO WOULD MEAN IMPLEMENTING MEXICO'S RATHER THAN OUR OWN ORIGIN RULES."

IN ORDER TO ENABLE THE RELEVANT TRADE BETWEEN HONG KONG AND MEXICO TO CONTINUE, THE TRADE DEPARTMENT DEVISED AND PUT FORWARD A PRAGMATIC SOLUTION TO THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT.

RATHER THAN CHANGING THE FORMAT OF CHKO, THE GACOS WILL, ON TRADERS' REQUEST, ISSUE A DOCUMENT CONTAINING INFORMATION ON TARIFF NUMBER, INVOICE NUMBER AND THE RELEVANT MANUFACTURING PROCESSES PERFORMED IN HONG KONG, WHICH SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO THE CHKO TO FACILITATE MEXICAN CUSTOMS INSPECTION.

/THE TRADE .....

THE TRADE DEPARTMENT WAS INFORMED OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT'S AGREEMENT TO THE PROPOSAL ON NOVEMBER 19.

"THIS IS CERTAINLY GOOD NEWS. HOPEFULLY THE DISRUPTED TRADE COULD RESUME IMMEDIATELY," MR YIU SAID.

HOWEVER, HE REMINDED TRADERS THAT THE VARIOUS DOCUMENTS ISSUED UNDER THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS WERE NOT IN THEMSELVES A CERTIFICATION THAT THE PRODUCTS SATISFIED MEXICAN ORIGIN RULES.

"THE MEXICAN AUTHORITIES WILL ANALYSE THE INFORMATION IN THE DOCUMENTS AND DECIDE ON THE ORIGIN OF GOODS," HE CAUTIONED.

"WHILE WE HAVE SOME INFORMATION ON THEIR RULES AND COMPANIES ARE WELCOMED TO CHECK WITH US, TRADERS SHOULD CONSULT THEIR IMPORTERS IN MEXICO, OR THE RELEVANT MEXICAN AUTHORITIES, ON HOW TO COMPLY WITH MEXICAN ORIGIN RULES IN ORDER TO AVOID CUSTOMS CLEARANCE PROBLEMS," HE SAID.

"THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS WILL TAKE IMMEDIATE EFFECT. TRADERS WILL BE INFORMED OF THE DETAILED ARRANGEMENT THROUGH A CIRCULAR ISSUED TODAY. WE SHALL OF COURSE CONTINUE TO MONITOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION AND WOULD BE PLEASED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE SHOULD ANY PROBLEMS ARISE IN FUTURE."

ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1994, THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED NEW CERTIFICATION OF ORIGIN REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPORTS OF MERCHANDISE CLASSIFIED IN SUCH TARIFF ITEMS THAT WERE SUBJECT TO MEXICAN ANTI-DUMPING OR COUNTERVAILING DUTIES.

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OBJECTIONS TO RATEABLE VALUES HANDLED

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THE RATING AND VALUATION DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (MONDAY) THAT IT HAD DEALT WITH ALL THE 17,625 OBJECTIONS TO THE NEW RATEABLE VALUES THAT WERE RECEIVED IN APRIL AND MAY THIS YEAR.

ABOUT 15 PER CENT WERE REDUCED, THE REMAINDER EITHER BEING CONFIRMED OR WITHDRAWN BY THE OBJECTOR.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT ASKED ANY RATEPAYER WHO LODGED AN OBJECTION IN APRIL OR MAY THIS YEAR AND WHO HAD NOT YET RECEIVED A NOTICE OF DECISION TO CONTACT MR TSANG TSZE-LAI OF THE DEPARTMENT BY PHONING 805 7734 IMMEDIATELY.

HE ADDED THAT IF THE RATEABLE VALUE HAD BEEN REDUCED AS A RESULT OF THE OBJECTION, THE AMENDMENT TO THE RATEABLE VALUE AND ANY ADJUSTMENT TO THE RATES PAYABLE WOULD BE EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1 THIS YEAR.

IF RATES PAYABLE ARE REDUCED, FUTURE RATES DEMANDS WILL BE ADJUSTED TO REFLECT THE CHANGE, HE SAID.

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BIOTECHNOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME INVITES ENROLMENT

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ALL BIOTECHNOLOGY-RELATED COMPANIES AND INSTITUTIONS OPERATING IN HONG KONG ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 1995 BIOTECHNOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME, AN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF INDUSTRY, MR RAYMOND YOUNG, SAID TODAY (MONDAY).

ORGANISED BY THE BIOTECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE OF THE INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE PROGRAMME IS A TRAINING SCHEME AIMED AT UPGRADING MANPOWER RESOURCES FOR THE EMERGING BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG.

"FIFTEEN UNDERGRADUATE/POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS FROM VARIOUS LOCAL TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE 1994 BIOTECHNOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME AND ACQUIRED INVALUABLE RESEARCH AND INDUSTRIAL EXPOSURE AT BOTH DOMESTIC AND OVERSEAS ORGANISATIONS.

"MOST OF LAST YEAR'S CO-SPONSORING COMPANIES HAVE ALREADY DECIDED TO JOIN THIS PROGRAMME AGAIN THIS YEAR IN VIEW OF THE IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE OF THE PREVIOUS GROUP OF INTERNS.

"AFTER A REVIEW OF THIS YEAR'S PROGRAMME, THE COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED TO ORGANISE A SIMILAR INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME IN 1995," MR YOUNG SAID.

ON THE ARRANGEMENT FOR FUNDING, HE SAID CO-SPONSORING COMPANIES AND INSTITUTIONS WOULD BE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE ABOUT 50 PER CENT OF THE COST OF THEIR RESPECTIVE PROGRAMMES.

"MONTHLY REMUNERATION RATES OF $7,000 AND $10,650 WILL BE PAYABLE TO UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE INTERNS RESPECTIVELY. THE COMMITTEE WILL SPONSOR 50 PER CENT OF THE REMUNERATION FOR ALL INTERNS," MR YOUNG SAID.

"A TRAVELLING ALLOWANCE EQUIVALENT TO ONE ROUND-TRIP ECONOMY CLASS AIR TICKET BETWEEN HONG KONG AND THE OVERSEAS DESTINATION OR A CASH ALLOWANCE OF $1,000 FOR INTERNS POSTED WITHIN GUANGDONG PROVINCE AND AN INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR ALL PARTICIPATING TERTIARY STUDENTS THROUGHOUT THE INTERNSHIP PERIOD WILL BE SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE.

"FOR OVERSEAS INTERNSHIP PROGRAMMES, CO-SPONSORING COMPANIES ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION FOR THEIR INTERNS THROUGHOUT THE INTERNSHIP PERIOD," MR YOUNG SAID.

ENROLMENT WILL BE INVITED IN FEBRUARY NEXT YEAR. SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FROM LOCAL TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH CO-SPONSORING COMPANIES. THE PROGRAMME WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BETWEEN JUNE AND SEPTEMBER NEXT YEAR.

INTERESTED COMPANIES AND INSTITUTIONS SHOULD CONTACT MR D C CHEUNG OF THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT ON TEL 737 2206 FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

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WORKING GROUP TO STUDY GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL

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THE EDUCATION COMMISSION HAS AGREED TO SET UP A WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW THE ISSUE OF ESTABLISHING A GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL IN HONG KONG.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER THE COMMISSION'S MEETING THIS AFTERNOON (MONDAY), THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION, PROFESSOR ROSIE YOUNG, SAID THE MEETING STUDIED A PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY THE COUNCIL ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN EDUCATION AND DECIDED THAT THE COMMISSION SHOULD SET UP A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY THE ISSUE.

THE COMMISSION ALSO EXAMINED THE OUTCOME OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE WORKING GROUP REPORT ON LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY.

"WE RECEIVED OVER 90 SUBMISSIONS, COVERING A VERY WIDE RANGE OF VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS. THERE WAS ONLY TIME TODAY FOR A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION, AND WE SHALL CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING IN DECEMBER," PROFESSOR YOUNG SAID.

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TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT'S AWARD SCHEME FOR BEST COUNTER STAFF

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT IS TO LAUNCH A BEST LICENSING SERVICE AWARD NEXT MONTH FOR THE COUNTER STAFF IN THE DEPARTMENT'S LICENSING DIVISION, THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, DR ERNEST LEE, SAID TODAY (MONDAY).

"THIS EVENT, SECOND OF ITS KIND, DEMONSTRATES OUR CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE CUSTOMER SERVICE THROUGH ENCOURAGING GOOD QUALITY WORK FROM STAFF AND GIVING RECOGNITION TO THOSE WHO PROVIDE THE BEST SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC," HE SAID.

ANNOUNCING DETAILS OF THE AWARD SCHEME, DR LEE SAID: "THE COUNTER STAFF HAVE MADE A LOT OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUPPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT'S PERFORMANCE PLEDGE SCHEME ON LICENSING SERVICES TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS."

THE SECOND PHASE OF PERFORMANCE PLEDGE SCHEME ANNOUNCED RECENTLY COVERS MORE SERVICES RANGING FROM LICENSING TO VEHICLE EXAMINATION MATTERS, HE SAID.

ON LICENSING SERVICES, HE SAID: "WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ADHERE TO THE PLEDGED WAITING TIME DESPITE THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR LICENSING SERVICES."

ON THE WORK OF THE 40-MEMBER CUSTOMER LIAISON GROUPS, HE SAID MEMBERS HAD MADE SOUND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING LICENSING SERVICES AND MANY OF THE PROPOSALS HAD BEEN IMPLEMENTED.

/"FREDBACK FROM .....

"FEEDBACK FROM OUR CUSTOMERS, CUSTOMER LIAISON GROUPS AND THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING. OUR STAFF HAVE BEEN DOING A JOLLY GOOD JOB," HE SAID.

"IN ORDER TO SHOW THE DEPARTMENT'S APPRECIATION, WE ARE GOING TO LAUNCH A BEST LICENSING SERVICE AWARD OF 1994 FOR THE COUNTER STAFF IN THE LICENSING DIVISION FROM DECEMBER 1 TO 31. THIS AWARD SCHEME IS SPONSORED BY THE SHELL HONG KONG LIMITED," HE ADDED.

DURING THE MONTH OF DECEMBER, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO COME TO THE LICENSING OFFICES FOR LICENSING OR DRIVING TEST APPOINTMENT SERVICES WILL BE INVITED TO COMPLETE A NOMINATION FORM ON THE BEST COUNTER STAFF AND PUT IT IN A SPECIAL BALLOT BOX LOCATED PROMINENTLY IN THESE OFFICES.

THE BEST 10 COUNTER STAFF SO ELECTED WILL EACH BE AWARDED A TROPHY AND A MEAL COUPON. NOMINATORS WILL ENTER A LUCKY DRAW IN WHICH 20 LUCKY ONES WILL EACH BE AWARDED A PETROL COUPON WORTH $500.

THERE WILL BE A PRIZE-PRESENTATION CEREMONY FOR THE AWARD WINNERS ON JANUARY 14 NEXT YEAR.

THE DIRECTOR FOR HONG KONG AND MACAU SHELL COMPANIES FOR CHINA AND HONG KONG, MR ROBERT YOUNG, SAID THE COMPANY WAS HONOURED TO BE ABLE TO SPONSOR THE BEST LICENSING SERVICE AWARD.

"THE AWARD AIMS TO ENCOURAGE A BETTER STANDARD OF SERVICE BY CIVIL SERVANTS TO THE PUBLIC," HE SAID.

HE URGED ALL PARTIES TO FULLY SUPPORT THE EVENT SO THAT THE GOAL IN IMPROVING SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC COULD BE ACHIEVED.

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DUKE OF KENT BRIEFED ON AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME PROGRESS

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HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF KENT WAS TODAY (MONDAY) BRIEFED ON THE LATEST PROGRESS OF THE 10 AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME PROJECTS.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, THE DUKE ARRIVED AT THE TSING MA BRIDGE SITE ON MA WAN, WHERE HE WAS BRIEFED BY THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, MR K C YEUNG, ON THE WORK PROGRESS OF THE TSING MA AND KAP SHUI MUN BRIDGES.

HE WAS ALSO SHOWN HOW THE TWO MAIN CABLES OF THE TSING MA SUSPENSION BRIDGE, EACH OF 1.1 METRES IN DIAMETERS, WERE BEING SPUN BETWEEN MA WAN AND TSING YI ISLANDS.

THIS WAS THEN FOLLOWED BY A VISIT TO THE NEW AIRPORT SITE AT CHEK LAP KOK WHERE THE DUKE WAS BRIEFED BY MR DOUGLAS OAKERVEE, PROJECT DIRECTOR OF THE PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY.

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FORCES PLAY HOST TO ROYAL VISITOR

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HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT WILL BE THE GUEST OF BRITISH FORCES HONG KONG ON WEDNESDAY (NOVEMBER 30).

THE DUCHESS HAS ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO BE PATRON OF THE HONG KONG LOCALLY ENLISTED PERSONNEL TRUST, A FUND LAUNCHED LAST YEAR TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE GARRISON'S CHINESE EX-SOLDIERS AND SAILORS WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN HARDSHIP, DISTRESS OR POVERTY AFTER THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY IN 1997.

IN HER ROLE AS PATRON, THE DUCHESS WILL VISIT STONECUTTERS ISLAND TO BE BRIEFED ON THE PROGRESS OF THE TRUST AND TO MEET THE SOLDIERS AND SAILORS WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM IT.

SHE WILL TOUR A DISPLAY OF STANDS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MANY ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY THE SOLDIERS OF THE HONG KONG MILITARY SERVICE CORPS AND LATER VISIT HMS TAMAR TO SEE THE LOCALLY-ENLISTED SAILORS OF THE HONG KONG SQUADRON AT WORK.

EARLIER IN THE DAY, AS DEPUTY COLONEL-IN-CHIEF OF THE ROYAL LOGISTIC CORPS, THE DUCHESS WILL VISIT THE PRINCE OF WALES BARRACKS IN CENTRAL TO BE INTRODUCED TO THE CORPS IN HONG KONG.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE VISITS OF THE DUCHESS.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDING THE VISIT TO THE ROYAL LOGISTIC CORPS AT THE PRINCE OF WALES BARRACKS SHOULD ARRIVE AT THE GURADROOM NO LATER THAN 9.45 AM. THERE WILL BE NO ADMITTANCE AFTER THIS TIME.

A FERRY WILL BE PROVIDED TO TAKE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES TO STONECUTTERS ISLAND FOR THE VISIT OF THE DUCHESS TO THE HONG KONG MILITARY SERVICE CORPS AND THE ROYAL NAVY. MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES USING THIS FACILITY SHOULD ARRIVE AT THE GUARDROOM, PRINCE OF WALES BARRACKS NO LATER THAN 1 PM.

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EDUCATION TV PROGRAMME WINS JAPAN PRIZE

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A NEW EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION PROGRAMME "LOVE AND RESPECT FOR THE ELDERLY", BROADCAST IN THIS SCHOOL YEAR, WON INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION IN THE 21ST JAPAN PRIZE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME CONTEST ORGANISED BY NHK.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SAID THE PROGRAMME, JOINTLY PRODUCED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG, ENTERED INTO A FIERCE COMPETITION WITH 143 PROGRAMMES FROM 34 COUNTRIES.

THE 25-MINUTE PROGRAMME WON THE SPECIAL JURY PRIZE FOR ITS EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY AND CONTENT, HE SAID.

"LOVE AND RESPECT FOR THE ELDERLY" PORTRAYS THE EXPERIENCE OF FOUR ELDERLY PERSONS THROUGH THEIR INTERACTION WITH FAMILY MEMBERS.

IT REFLECTS THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ELDERLY PEOPLE AND THE YOUNGER GENERATION IN TERMS OF ATTITUDE, DISPOSITION, THINKING AND REACTION TO INCIDENTS IN LIFE.

ALSO DEPICTED IS THAT MOST FAMILY DISPUTES AND PROBLEMS COME FROM THE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AND FAILURE TO COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES.

THROUGH WATCHING THE PROGRAMME, IT IS HOPED THAT STUDENTS WILL LEARN TO RECOGNISE THE INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ELDERLY TOWARDS THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY AND REPAY THEM WITH LOVE, RESPECT, CARE, CONCERN AND UNDERSTANDING.

THE PROGRAMME IS PRODUCED BY MISS GLORIA FAN OF THE DEPARTMENT'S EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION SECTION, AND DIRECTED BY MR SIDNEY WONG OF THE RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG.

THE AWARD WAS PRESENTED IN TOKYO, JAPAN, ON NOVEMBER 17.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MISS ELAINE CHUNG, WILL OFFICIATE AT A PRESENTATION CEREMONY AND VIEWING OF THE PROGRAMME "LOVE AND RESPECT FOR THE ELDERLY" AT THE EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION CENTRE, 79 BROADCAST DRIVE, KOWLOON TONG, AT NOON ON WEDNESDAY (NOVEMBER 30).

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CROP PROTECTION SEMINAR ON THURSDAY

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LOCAL CROP FARMERS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY INTERESTED IN ENHANCING THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNIQUES IN AGRICULTURAL CULTIVATION ARE WELCOME TO TAKE PART IN A SEMINAR ON THURSDAY (DECEMBER 1).

ORGANISED BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, THE CROP PROTECTION SEMINAR WILL BE HELD BETWEEN 9 AM AND 5 PM AT THE DEPARTMENT'S TAI LUNG EXPERIMENTAL STATION, LIN TONG MEI, SHEUNG SHUI.

THE SEMINAR WILL BE CONDUCTED BY AGRICULTURAL OFFICERS MISS WENDY KO AND MR CLIVE LAU. BOTH ARE SPECIALISED IN PEST AND DISEASES INVESTIGATORY AND CONTROL WORK. OTHER PANELISTS INCLUDE STAFF MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT'S PLANT PROTECTION SECTION.

THE SEMINAR COMPRISES OF LECTURES BY SPEAKERS, A SLIDE SHOW, FIELD DEMONSTRATION AND PRACTICES, WHICH WILL ALSO BE FOLLOWED BY PANEL DISCUSSIONS.

MAJOR TOPICS TO BE COVERED IN THE WORKSHOP INCLUDE: BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF DIAMONDBACK MOTH BY THE USE OF PHEROMONE AND BT; INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT OF ASIAN CORN BORER, AND THE FIELD RECOGNITION AND CONTROL OF COMMON PESTS AND DISEASES ON VEGETABLES.

THE SAFETY IN PESTICIDE APPLICATION, PRECAUTIONS IN SPRAYING PESTICIDES AND THE CHOICE OF SUITABLE AND EFFECTIVE SPRAYERS AS WELL AS THEIR MAINTENANCE AND MINOR REPAIR WILL ALSO BE DISCUSSED.

AS THE SEMINAR CAN ONLY ACCOMMODATE 80 PARTICIPANTS, THOSE INTERESTED SHOULD REGISTER EARLY WITH THE TAI LUNG EXPERIMENTAL STATION. ENQUIRIES CAN ALSO BE DIRECTED TO THE STATION ON TEL 679 4354.

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RELOCATION OF PNEUMOCONIOSIS CLINIC

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THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TODAY (MONDAY) ANNOUNCES THAT THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS CLINIC HAS BEEN RELOCATED TO SHAUKEIWAN JOCKEY CLUB CLINIC, FOURTH FLOOR, 8 CHAI WAN ROAD, SHAU KEI WAN, HONG KONG.

THE OPENING HOURS OF THE CLINIC ARE: 8.30 AM TO 12.45 PM FROM MONDAY TO SATURDAY AND 1.45 PM TO 4.45 PM FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS CLINIC COULD BE REACHED ON TEL 513 0465.

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WATER STORAGE FIGURE

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STORAGE IN HONG KONG'S RESERVOIRS AT 9 AM TODAY (MONDAY) STOOD AT 84.8 PER CENT OF CAPACITY OR 497.021 MILLION CUBIC METRES.

THIS TIME LAST YEAR THE RESERVOIRS CONTAINED 466.500 MILLION CUBIC METRES OF WATER, REPRESENTING 79.6 PER CENT OF CAPACITY.

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HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	$ MILLION	TIME (HOURS)	CUMULATIVE CHANGE ($ MILLION)
OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	567	0930	+675
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,541	1000	+675
CHANGE ATTRIBUTABLE TO :		1100	+690
MONEY MARKET ACTIVITY	+674	1200	+691
LAF TODAY	+300	1500	+691
		1600	+674

LAF RATE 3.75% BID/5.75% OFFER TWI 121.7 *+0.1* 28.11.94

HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY

EF BILLS

TERMS	YIELD
1 WEEK	4.71
1 MONTH	4.86
3 MONTHS	5.20
6 MONTHS	5.60
12 MONTHS	6.18

EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
18 MONTHS	2605	6.35	99.70	6.67
24 MONTHS	2611	6.90	99.94	7.05
29 MONTHS	3704	6.15	97.62	7.37
35 MONTHS	3710	7.25	99.37	7.63
58 MONTHS	5909	7.45	97.52	8.24

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 15,771 MN

CLOSED 28 NOVEMBER 1994

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